

What is claimed is:

1. A sampling aliquotter for aspirating aliquot portions of sample fluid in a sample fluid tube closed by a closure and for dispensing said aliquot portions into a vessel, said aliquotter comprising:  
a horizontal drive, a vertical drive, a pump module and a cleansing module, the horizontal drive adapted to position the vertical drive above the sample fluid tube, the vessel and the cleansing module, the vertical drive adapted to drive a probe through the closure, the pump module adapted to aspirate and dispense sample fluid through the probe, the cleansing module adapted to cleanse the sample fluid probe.
2. The sampling aliquotter of claim 1 wherein the vertical drive comprises a linear actuator and a sample tube retainer, the linear actuator operable to drive the probe through the closure, lower the tube retainer into contact with the closure, retract the probe from the closure and raise the tube retainer off the closure.
3. The sampling aliquotter of claim 2 wherein the vertical drive further comprises a locking mechanism adapted to lock the probe or the tube retainer in the downward vertical direction, the locking mechanism locking or releasing the probe and the retainer with a first and second clips mounted on a single round shaft, the clips rotatable between a binding position and a free position by a rotary actuator such that when the first clip binds the probe, the second clip releases the retainer and when the second clip binds the retainer, the first clip binds the probe.
4. The sampling aliquotter of claim 1 wherein the cleansing module comprises a cleansing body having a cleansing chamber formed therein

to receive the probe, the cleansing body having two pairs of tubings ported thereto, a first pair of tubing connected to an air knife supply source, a second pair of tubing connected to a pressurized rinse water source, the air knife source activated when the probe is lowered by the vertical drive into the cleansing chamber, the pressurized rinse water source activated when the probe is removed from the cleansing chamber by the vertical drive.

5. The sampling aliquotter of claim 1 further comprising a wash module adapted to pump a cleaning solution through the probe along with a flow of pressurized air from the pump module.
6. The sampling aliquotter of claim 1 wherein the cleansing chamber is in vacuum communication with a waste reservoir.